

temple of Belus, with a view to their gradual increase, dependent on the life of the king for whose tomb they were intended, and that they were ultimately completed and cased from the top. I think Mr. Wild, the architect, first suggested it to him. Thus over the sepulchral chamber (A) there might first be formed a small structure of three steps, which, if the king should at once die might be filled in and cased to form a small pyramid (B. B. fig. 9); but if

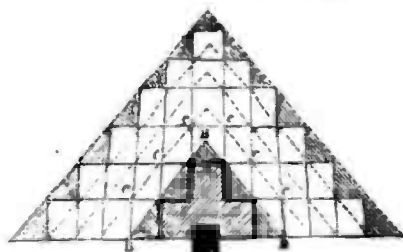


FIG. 9.

he continued to reign might receive another step of the same height, and an increase to each of the existing steps (c c), which would then be ready for completion, or might again be increased. Several of the smaller pyramids here (as we have already seen), as well as in Mexico, to which I will refer hereafter, were unquestionably thus formed. Moreover, this theory seems to agree with the description of their construction given by Herodotus. Will you excuse me if I quote the passage? He says:—"The ascent of the pyramid was regularly graduated by what some call steps and others altars. Having finished the first flight, they elevated the stones by the aid of machines constructed of short pieces of wood; from the second by a similar engine they were raised to the third, and so on to the summit." Again,—"The summit of the pyramid was first of all finished; descending thence, they regularly completed the whole."—*Euterpe*. It is a curious point, but I will not go further into it.

Egypt contains more than forty pyramids, some of brick, some of stone; and much ingenuity has been exercised in the attempt to discover their real purpose. Piles of books have been written upon them. Some, with little reason, considered that the Egyptians wished, by hieroglyphics on their surface, to convey to posterity their national history; others, that they were astronomical observatories; and a third, that they were the granaries erected by Joseph!

There seems, however, little reason to doubt that the popular opinion, that they were intended for the sepulchres and monuments of the monarchs, is correct. They are found, as we have seen, to be for the most part solid, with simply a few confined passages leading to small chambers for the reception of a sarcophagus. I dare say you have read Belzoni's account of his impressions on first entering the Great Pyramid; if not, do so.

"Great princes," writes Cowper, "have great playthings. Some have played At hewing mountains into men, and some At building human wonders mountain-high. Some have amused the dull, sad years of life (Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad) With schemes of monumental fame; and sought By pyramids and mausoleum pomp, Short-lived themselves, to immortalise their bones."

It is difficult, at first, to realise the notion of 366,000 men being employed for twenty years to prepare a receptacle for the body of a fellow-mortal. Knowing, however, as we do, the importance which the Egyptians attached to their sepulchres, and the splendour lavished upon them, the fact ceases to be improbable. Diodorus Siculus, speaking on this subject, says (lib. i. cap. iv.), "The Egyptians call the houses of the living Inns, because they stay in them but a little while; but the sepulchres of the dead they call everlasting habitations, because they abide in the grave to infinite generations." To render this everlasting habitation, then, worthy of themselves, we can readily believe that the despotic monarch of an enslaved people would think no cost too great:—

"And round a tyrant's tomb, who none deserved,  
For one vile carcass, perish'd countless lives."  
THOMSON.

It is curious to note that, after all the trouble taken to preserve their remains, some of them should have come to be unrolled by a Pettigrew, and framed and glazed in the British Museum.

Whether or not the children of Israel, amongst their other labours, were employed on any of the pyramids, I will not pretend to say. The new King of Egypt, "which knew not Joseph," made their lives bitter with hard bondage "in mortar and in brick," and we learn that they built for Pharaoh "treasure cities, Pithom and Raameses." Josephus, indeed, says, "They put them to the draining of rivers into channels; walling of towns; casting up of dykes and banks to keep off inundations; nay, the erecting of fantastical pyramids; forcing upon them the learning of several painful trades, and tying them up to a perpetual restlessness of labour." The Israelites left Egypt about 1490 years B.C.; Mr. Fergusson says 1312 B.C. Although captives

of all nations, as well as the natives, were constantly employed in brickmaking, it is a curious fact, says Wilkinson, that more bricks have been discovered which bear the mark of the monarch who is supposed to have reigned at the time of the Exodus than of any other period. Bricks simply dried in the sun were extensively used, and, in consequence of the dryness of the climate, have endured well. I dare say you have noticed illustrations of paintings in Thebes, representing brickmakers overlooked by taskmasters.

I fear I have been led into more detail than will be agreeable to you, and will therefore break off. In my next I will endeavour to bring before you some of the architectural peculiarities of the buildings of Egypt; and, in order to smarten up this communication, to "put a trimming to it," as your maid might say, I append a view of a fine example of an Egyptian facade, the Temple at Dendera, which will serve me as an illustration when I next have the pleasure of addressing you.

Believe me, Dear Sorillah, ever truly yours,  
Meggs.



FIG. 10.—TEMPLE AT DENDERA.

#### THE POWDER MAGAZINE IN HYDE PARK.

As your publication presents several matters of interest to ladies, and proposes a folio or part of a sheet for them, it occurs to me to say that many of our sex living even more remote from the dread mine of danger called the Powder Magazine in Hyde-park, may, at moments of nervous excitement, feel as poignantly the terrors of a dreadful explosion as myself, who am but 300 paces distant from the fulminating deposit.

If editors would not tell too much of the truth (cabinet statesmen do not like it), but suppress, for the sake of tranquillising weak temperaments, such accidents as the blowing up of the gunpowder-mills near Hounslow (exploded and annihilated last year), or if the open-mouthed American feuilletons had refrained from proclaiming to the world the awful destruction effected for miles around the powder magazine near Boston, where portions of houses were propelled distances of three miles, whole forests of trees uprooted and borne like straws on a whirlwind, then might we of the weaker sex abide around, or even walk on the slumbering volcano unapprehensive because unconscious of the latent danger. What can be more mischievous, more destructive of the peace of retired society, than to sound such alarms? Ought a physician to foreshadow to a consulting patient all the horrors of an incipient malevolent disorder, merely because he had a clear idea of the prognosis? Should he not rather soothe, by removing, or by endeavouring to abate, the obvious symptoms of disease? Surely he ought not—would not—excite fears, unless, perhaps, he apprehended a repugnance to take the remedies prescribed in such a case.

In the American explosion it is said that only 150 barrels of gunpowder caused an eruption like Hæcla. It awes me to reflect whether there be not ten times that quantity sleeping in the mine, under the guard of two sentinels at the corner of Kensington-gardens, 500 paces from the Crystal Palace. Supposing that no accident arise that human precaution could prevent, what can we interpose to ward off the natural strife of elements? Several oaks in the Park have been riven by lightning.

The church steeple near Victoria-gate (very lately), and many others, besides numerous more humble structures, have fallen under the bolt of heaven. Men can now direct electric fire to their purposes, but they cannot control the storm.

If in America 150 barrels spread devastation three miles, how awful is it to contemplate the ruin effected by such a calamity in a population compacted within that radius from such a central Hyde-park-gardens, and the concomitant squares—Grosvenor, Belgravia, Mayfair, and even Kensington, with her palace—are there no nervous spirits amongst you to sympathise with me in quailing under so dread a prognostic?

Liverpool, with calculating precaution for the soul of commerce (her teeming stores, warehouses, and ships), has devised and insisted on the removal of powder-magazines from her precincts: that prudence which, under our improved institutions, pre-admonishes men to insure their houses and property against loss by fire; and which, looking farther than our own generation, leads them to provide for children and dependants, by policies that come into reality and life when the insurer sinks into the grave; ought to stimulate transitory humanity in the endeavour to guard against even the remotest possible contingency of an overwhelming and indiscriminate destruction, such as, mayhap you will say, my idle apprehensions have elicited. Yet, Sir, I think you will not say so; but if you do, recollect there is no incorporated company within the limits of London which would contract for such a policy, and if there were, the register of its enrolment would have vanished from earth, together with every created thing within its vortex, as well as the astute policy-holder and thy reader, SOPHIA Q.—

P.S.—I hold gunpowder, like poisons, to have its uses, and even that weapons of war, like surgical instruments, are productive of good: the gangrened and morbid member must be amputated to save the diseased body. Store, by all means, store weapons of defence; guard safe the nation's thunder; but remove the elements of danger from our thresholds, and banded troops from habitual and residential intercourse with the people.